Hot To

HUDSON NOTES

By George Schmidt

A FIRE EXTINGUISHER is carried by some motorists in their collector vehicle and perhaps in their current-model car as well. The best-remembered authentic type for automotive use during Hudson's years was a brass hand-pump unit containing carbon tetrachloride, under the "Pyrene" or other brand name. It produced a heavyweight vapor which choked the fire by cutting off oxygen, and it was fairly effective. But the vapor was poisonous, and in fact could generate phosgene gas when hot. These units have nearly disappeared at present. The traditional soda/acid/water extinguisher, seen in buildings, was not suitable for automotive use. It too has nearly disappeared.

However, extinguishers containing non-poisonous compressed carbon dioxide were also used in house and car. Another type c. 1950 was probably too small for individual use, but was sold in sets of two or three with a mounting rack which was more convenient than a single large unit for car or truck. A slightly larger type resembling an aerosol spray can was intended for dual duty——either for fire or for emergency tire inflation. Hudson listed an accessory fire extinguisher for 1950-51, and a pump-type version for 1946-47.

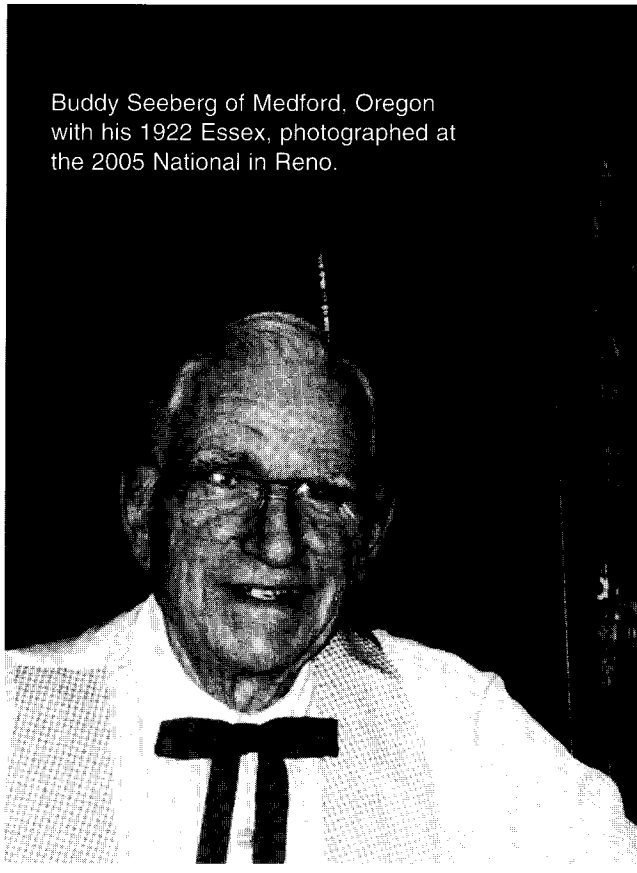
Modern extinguishers are safer and more efficient, but do not look quite as much at home on a collector vehicle.

PROBABLY THE club's most-accessorized (but fully authentic) 1949 Commodore 8 is the one belonging to Jim Zimmerman, Wisconsin. A recent letter states that he has most of the authentic kit parts for installing directional signals, but not the steering column (chromed) with pre-cut hole for the switch canceling fingers. This hole can be cut (as was commonly done on earlier Hudsons), just above the ball-bearing inside column, and of the same size and shape as the one in top of signal switch box (note the small lugs at corners). Two nail-sized canceling pins must also be placed in steering wheel hub (which usually is pre-drilled for them). Note that the upper bearing for gearshift shaft must also be changed, to one which provides mounting holes for the switch box. At dashboard, a special steering column clamp is needed to accommodate signal wires. Although the plastic switch-box cover (ivory/silver) was found mostly on Super models, it appears best on all with '48-49 deluxe (18") steering wheel, since it matches the center ornament on wheel.

The little pilot light goes in the center of the small panel between glovebox and driver's door (or slightly above center, since a matching pilot light goes about an inch directly below it, for backup lights).

And yes, if double-contact sockets for the parking lights cannot be found, it should be possible to convert the single-contact ones, but the insulated double-contact washer will need to be prevented from turning in its place (note the usual molded lug at one edge). A slot for this lug may need to be cut in the socket. If possible, use #1158 bulbs (rather than #1154) to avoid filing of one bayonet pin.

ANOTHER LETTER, with illustrations, from Buddy Seeberg, Oregon, describes the directional signals available (as aftermarket items only) much earlier, in the 1920's. A *Hemmings Motor News* article points out that there was no uniformity about these at the time——there were as many styles as there were accessory companies making them. Most were for rear of car only, but a few——including the Safeturn Signals which Buddy has on his 1922 Essex——were visible from both front and rear. Some had lights; some had a moving signal device——and the Safeturn Signal had both, with combined vacuum/electric operation. Small lanterns marked "R" and "L" were mounted at either side of wind-



Buddy Seeberg of Medford, Oregon with his 1922 Essex, photographed at the 2005 National in Reno.

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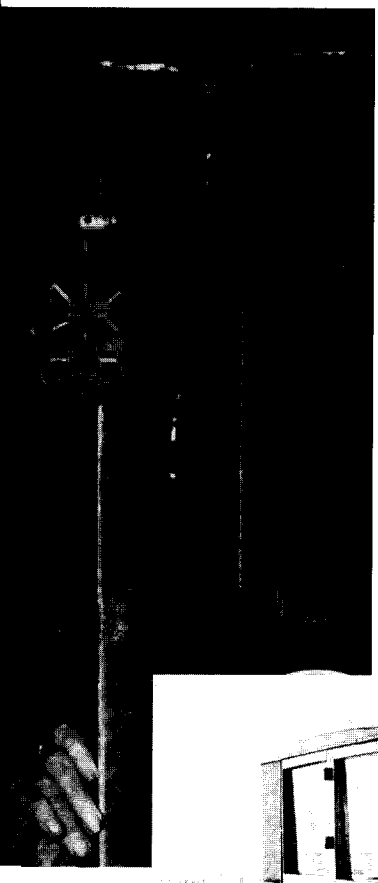
shield, just [illegible]er front visor; and when signali[illegible]m, these lighted up and also moved out horizontally. The control lever attached to the left of steering column, much as with modern signals (but was not self-canceling). Other signals at the time commonly used some form of amber arrows, with toggle or button switching; and one featured a 4-way control since it included lettering for "BACK" and "STOP" as well as "LEFT" and "RIGHT."



Photos by S. F. Meyer

THE ACCOMPANYING PICTURE of the Hudson factory is from an old 1920 post card sent to me by a friend. The original picture is black-and-white, but colorized, as many post cards were then. Another photo shows Buddy Seeberg and his 1922 Essex, complete with Safeturn signals.

SOME UNUSUAL Hudson accessories are reported by M. E. (Red) Burke, California. His 1946 Hudson has a pushbutton (rather than lever-type) turn signal switch, said to be factory-installed. Normally these push-button units (non-canceling) were used on 1940-41 Hudsons, so perhaps this was an early-1946 leftover. Red also has the Hudson rear-wiper kit, which should fit most models except convertibles and perhaps the 1950's with divided rear window. He has one of the dual-voltage electric shavers too, and one of the extension hoses for inflating spare tire from outside the car.

A red light with small swinging lantern was a Hudson accessory for 1936, and probably for other cars as well. I've also seen one pictured on a Hispano-Suiza (!). It was intended as a supplementary brake light, but used in pairs it was also an effective rear turn signal, and Red recalls installing two of them for this purpose on a big 1937 Hudson when he was working at the dealership.

Another of Red's accessories is a small defroster fan driven by a vacuum turbine rather than an electric motor. These were used on various cars of the 1930's (a Trico product, I believe, and more costly than the electric versions!).

FIBER COMPOSITION timing gears for camshaft were favored for quiet running, although not quite as durable as the aluminum ones. Early 1946 Sixes were factory-equipped with fiber gears; late-1946 and 1947 used aluminum. All Eights 1946 and up used aluminum, although there are tales of a few brand-new 1946's having the gear dealer-replaced by a fiber one because of a noise problem. Both Sixes and Eights used the same size gears, continuing through 1947 and 1952 respectively. One unusual failure on an Eight was reported when the fiber rim loosened on its metal center, thus putting the engine out of time even though the teeth were O.K. Many of the fiber gears were made by Stewart-Warner. Prewar Hudson timing gears

This colorized post card, postmarked 1920, shows the Hudson Motor Co., Detroit, Michigan.

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were made with two tooth angles: 14 deg. in 1940, and 20 deg. thereafter. However, the 1940 gears could be replaced by the later ones if in a matched set.

A YEAR AGO—December 2004—the HET Northern California Chapter newsletter (Ed Drexler, editor) reproduced an assortment of Hudson export advertisements—French, German, Swedish, etc. It is interesting to see the Hudson sales pitch in a foreign language.

THE STRANGE old horsepower formula: piston diameter (inches) squared and divided by 2.5, and multiplied by the number of cylinders, would give the H.P. rating. Length of stroke was not considered since the formula was meant to represent output at a piston speed of just 1000 feet per minute (2000 r.p.m. with a 3-inch stroke, for example). For any modern engine this rating will be much too low, but that is not objectionable since it has traditionally been used for tax purposes. Incidentally, the "horsepower" unit was never intended to mean the maximum that a draft horse could pull, but rather the load that he could pull steadily without tiring. A good team could thus give 6 H.P. and possibly more——but only for short intervals. One horsepower equals 550 foot-pounds per second. Hudson horsepower ratings——the 145-H.P. Hornet, for instance——were quite conservative and realistic, in comparison with the inflated claims by many Brand X's at the time.

A 1929 TIRE BOOKLET has been sent to me by our *WTN* Editor. It's a neat example of 2-color printing, and lists tire pressures for the dozens of car makes then available. And its suggestions for tire care are much like those at present: maintain correct inflation pressure (especially avoiding under-inflation), be sure wheels are aligned; avoid sharp blows, or contact with oils or solvents, or needless sudden starts and stops, etc. To which I may add that modern radial tires appear more sensitive to over-inflation than are ordinary bias-ply ones—they tend to break either the radial cords or the belt.

THAT'S ALL for now.
A happy holiday season and
a specially good
Christmas to everyone!

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